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Biotechnology

Green Party Steps Up Anti-Biotech Rhetoric

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Approved by:

Bobby Richey Jr.
U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Dietmar Achilles

Report Highlights:

The Green Party has implemented a country-wide seminar campaign against agricultural biotechnology for the next three months. Seminars with different anti-biotech topics and regional aspects will be held in seven different German states.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Berlin [GM1]
[GM]

GREEN PARTY STEPS UP ANTI-BIOTECH RHETORIC

SUMMARY: The German Green Party has implemented a country-wide campaign against agricultural biotechnology. Reports indicate that seminars will be held in several German states in the coming three months featuring special regional aspects. Objectives of the seminars are to create pressure against the recently proposed amendments to the German biotechnology law and put pressure on farmers planning to grow Bt corn in the coming season to change their decisions.

On March 16, the German Green political party began a series of seminars against agricultural biotechnology in plant production. The first event was held in Berlin with future events planned as outlined below.

States	Topic
· Bayern + Baden-Wuerttemberg	Biotech-free regions
· Sachsen-Anhalt + Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Jobs and Agro-Biotechnology
· Rheinland-Pfalz + Niedersachsen	Renewable Resources
· Hessen	Milk and Honey without biotechnology
· Nordrhein-Westfalen	Risk Research

Reports indicate that the objectives of the seminars are to counter positive information in the media about the worldwide growth of agricultural biotechnology and its safety. It also appears that focus will also be placed on "contamination" of imports with unapproved events and the financial damage that can occur. In addition, the Greens are attempting to reach out and build a coalition of support against the proposed changes to the German biotechnology law that were recently announced by the Grand Coalition Government.

Comments: By keeping anti-biotech information in the press over the coming months it is likely that the Greens will be able to generate sufficient noise to make the passage of the amendments to the German biotechnology law more difficult for the Government. It will be important that technology providers and other interested stakeholders present an opposing viewpoint to the general public in order to support Chancellor Merkel's initiative.

OTHER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

By Mid-March, German farmers had registered 3,730 hectares of cropland for planting of biotech seeds, almost four times the area of 2006. This area does not yet include the fields used for field tests. Farmers and breeders are expected to register their test fields in late March through early May.

The leading two suppliers of Bt-corn varieties estimate that already seeds for about 2,700 hectares have been sold. However, opponents to biotech are aggressively intimidating farmers to give up their planting intentions. A new strategy is to pressure the farmers with the warning that the rental contract for his land will be canceled or not renewed if he plants biotech seeds.

Recent related reports from FAS Berlin:

Report Number	Post	Title	Date Released
GM7003	AgBerlin	Biotech Outreach to Germany	01/30/07
GM7006	AgBerlin	Biotech Corn Planting Intentions for 2007	02/21/07

Report Number	Post	Title	Date Released
These reports can be accessed through the FAS website http://www.fas.usda.gov/scriptsw/attacherep/default.asp .			